

PROCLAMATION!

To the Inhabitants of Guam:

In issuing this decree the Government desires and earnestly invokes Divine blessing and guidance in its official action and in the daily pursuits and occupations of the citizens of Guam.

By the cession of the Isle of Guam to the United States of America, all of the authority, power and responsibilities of sovereignty were transferred to this Government, and in transforming and organizing the new political power the surest and speediest route to success, prosperity and happiness for the inhabitants of this island is by benevolent assimilation to the fundamental principles that constitute the basis of Free American Government.

Honest labor with just compensation, dignified by faithful consideration of the mutual interests and welfare of all persons concerned, should insure prosperity to this community; whereas, the existing labor-degrading system of human bondage and unjust, indefinite servitude or Peonage, permitted during the late Spanish control in this island, is, in fact, a system of Slavery, and as such, is subversive of good government, is an obstacle to progressive civilization, a menace to popular liberty, and a violation of the sacred privileges guaranteed by the Constitution of the United States.

Now, therefore, by virtue of the authority vested in me by his Excellency, the President of the United States, I, Richard P. Leary, Captain, United States Navy, Governor of the Isle of Guam, do hereby announce and publicly proclaim absolute prohibition and total abolition of Human Slavery or Peonage in the Isle of Guam on and after the Twenty-second day of February, A. D. 1900, and all persons are hereby commanded to comply with the requirements of this proclamation.

In witness whereof, I have hereunto set my hand and have caused the seal of the United States Naval Station, Isle of Guam, to be affixed.

Done at Agana, Isle of Guam, this First day of January, in the year of our Lord, One Thousand Nine Hundred, and of the Independence of the United States of America, the One Hundred and Twenty-fourth.

RICHARD P. LEARY, U. S. N.,
GOVERNOR.

Naval Governor of the Isle of Guam, Abolishing Slavery and Peonage

Our policy has been to extend as rapidly as possible the privileges of free, democratic government to people under our jurisdiction. Accordingly, the United States, when it acquired Guam after the Spanish-American War, as a first step abolished slavery and peonage in the Isle. The official printed proclamation of February 22, 1900, of Richard P. Leary, the naval governor of the island, is displayed.

Lent to The Freedom Train by the National Archives